



San Diego City Attorney CASEY GWINN

NEWS RELEASE

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City Attorney Casey Gwinn, District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis, and Supervisor Pam Slater-Price Urge Domestic Violence Victims to Come Forward for Help

Tragedy struck in El Cajon, California yesterday when a gunman opened fire killing an innocent young woman and injuring a nine-year-old girl. Police authorities confirm the gunman was the estranged husband of the victim. While the domestic violence murder-suicide is under investigation, San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn, District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis and County Supervisor Pam Slater-Price are urging any victim of domestic violence to come forward for help.

"Domestic violence murders never happen without warning signs beforehand. Most domestic violence homicides are preventable if adequate resources are available to the victims and their families," said City Attorney Gwinn. "Tragically, most victims and their families don't access all the available services," said District Attorney Dumanis. "If anyone is in danger or experiencing violence, call for help. The San Diego Family Justice Center is the first Center of its kind in the County, but it won't be the last," said Dumanis.

City Attorney Casey Gwinn and District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis are currently working cooperatively with Supervisors Pam Slater-Price and Greg Cox to develop a regional plan to create similar specialized service centers in East County, North County, and South Bay.

"There is no reason why any person should live in fear of a violent family member," said County Supervisor Slater-Price. "I urge everyone who needs help to get it before tragedy strikes."

Slater-Price, Gwinn, and Dumanis are urging victims of domestic violence to come forward for help. Though the San Diego Family Justice Center's jurisdiction is currently the City of San Diego, most of the available resources can be made available to victims and their children irrespective of where they live in the county. "If we can provide help for any victim of domestic violence, through any of our community partners, we will," said District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis. If it is not possible to come to downtown San Diego, victims are urged to call the County's new confidential hotline 1-888-DVLINKS for services where they live.

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Gwinn helped establish the internationally known San Diego Family Justice Center in October 2002, a “one stop shop” service center for victims of domestic violence and their children. With the unanimous support of the Mayor and City Council, the San Diego Family Justice Center has already become a national model for communities across the country. Currently, 170 communities are competing to be one of the first twelve Family Justice Centers funded by the National Family Justice Center Initiative through the United States Department of Justice. The San Diego Family Justice Center is serving as the demonstration site for the entire nation.

Since opening on October 10, 2002, over 7,000 clients and their children have come to the San Diego Family Justice Center for help. At the Family Justice Center, a client can obtain a restraining order, develop a safety plan, receive a forensic medical exam, meet with a prosecutor or domestic violence detective, get a free cell phone, receive counseling, obtain assistance with transportation, food, or clothing needs, and access a variety of other services. The Center has been called a “sanctuary of safety” for victims of domestic violence and their children.

Most significantly, no one seeking services at the San Diego Family Justice Center has died since it opened nearly 18 months ago. The regionalization process, designed to create Centers throughout the County is expected to take 3-5 years.

“When victims come to our specialized, multi-disciplinary Family Justice Center, they are more likely to live because of the services available to them,” said Gwinn. “Sadly, many are still not coming forward for help. Domestic violence, however, then thrives in secrecy and the danger level rises higher and higher without professional intervention.”

For more information about the San Diego Family Justice Center, visit familyjusticecenter.org

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